

## FY PARTE OR LATE FILED

906 West Main Avenue

Spokane, Washington

99201-0976

FAX: 509 626-5365

509 626-5305

August 20, 1996

RECEIVED NOV 1 2 1996

Fed : Comunity for warmington

Office of Secretary

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW Room 814 Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket 96-45, Universal Service

Dear Mr. Hundt:

As Library Director of Spokane Public Library in Spokane, Washington, I am in strong support of meaningful discounts for libraries and schools as the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal-State Joint Board implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In passing this landmark legislation, it is clear that Congress meant to ensure that, upon a bona fide request, a carrier is to provide services to libraries and schools at some type of discounted rate, less than the amounts charged for similar services to other parties.

The "equity rate" will permit Spokane Public Library to continue to fulfill our mission as a community access point to the information infrastructure and to help provide the public with an expanded range of information opportunities for lifelong learning, work and career development, job hunting, citizenship, and leisure. This "equity rate" will spur library use of new technology and encourage development of new consumer markets while providing consumers with the opportunity to gain new skills and technological literacy at their libraries. For many of our patrons, the library is the only access they have to the skills and technology demands the new century will bring.

Libraries need the capacity to support large numbers of simultaneous users and multimedia and high bandwidth applications. Libraries are increasingly providing local community electronic information. To provide libraries with the flexibility to meet community needs, all telecommunications services available commercially, by tariff, or be contract should be available to them at a discount.

Libraries are responsible and accountable users of technology; they have in the past and will continue to leverage efficiently all kinds of resources available to them, but libraries need affordable, discounted access to best serve the American public. Deeper discounts

will also be necessary for libraries in high cost and rural areas, and in low income communities to reach "affordability."

I ask that you consider what libraries are telling you about their local needs, including the necessity of making any terms and conditions for an equity rate simple and straightforward. We do not need to add to the costs of administration or local library budgets by onerous or complicated procedures to obtain a discounted rate.

I encourage you to assure universal service for all Americans by providing discounted and equitable telecommunications rates for libraries and schools.

Sincerely,

Aubrey W. George

AWG:bb

cc: Board of Trustees

G. Brakel

00:96-45



Samuel W. McAleese Assistant Principal

## Bridgehampton Union Free School District

Montauk Highway • P.O. Box 3021 • Bridgehampton • NY 11932-3021 • 516 537-0271

John W. Edwards Superintendent

October 16, 1996

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Helen Giles Smith Guidance Director

RECEIVED

NOV 1 2 1996

Fed and Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street NW Room 814 Washington, DC 20554

cc: Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

We write in strong support of affordable and meaningful discounts for all schools and libraries so that every school child and lifelong learner can have access to the world of information technology. The passage of the Telecommunications Act earlier this year mandates the development of a rate for education or an "E-rate" to secure affordable rates reflecting the financial capability of this community.

There is no doubt that advanced telecommunications services are important to improving learning, sparking the imagination and leveling the playing field for all of this nation's people. Affordable access to technology in all classrooms and libraries will assure that our children and lifelong learners can connect with the technology needed to compete in today's and tomorrow's workforce. Advanced telecommunications services in the classroom will also create informed and skilled consumers of new technology well into the 21st century.

#### Better Educated Students

Multiple academic studies have shown technology in the classroom improves learning and engages students.

Allowing schools and libraries to choose their technology mix from all available telecommunications services provides another tool by which to improve academic success one student at a time.

#### Accessibility

Only nine percent of public school classrooms, four percent of private schools and 28 percent of public libraries are connected to the informational and learning resources on the Internet.

Providing deeper discounts to disadvantaged schools and libraries helps to give all learners a better chance to compete on an equal footing. No school or library should be denied entry onto the information superhighway for lack of funds.

Nothing widens accessibility like affordability. Discounts on all available telecommunications services are the surest pathway to both.

As the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal-State Joint Board implement the universal serve provision we ask you to ensure that telecommunications companies provide services to schools and libraries at significantly discounted rates. All schools and libraries need long-term discounts that are truly affordable, flexible and offer choice in determining which services best meet each communities needs. It is imperative that these services are linked directly into the classroom, lab and work station.

We urge you to act upon this historic opportunity to bring the world of information to every school child and lifelong learner in America.

Sincerely,

John W. Edwards

Superintendent

Bridgehampton UFSD

ohn Wyche

President, Board of Education

Me WEdwa

Bridgehampton UFSD

JWE/JW/ae

cc: Board of Education

Nassau Suffolk School Boards Association

00:96-45

### FY PARTE OR LATE FILED

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## NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY

September 30, 1996

RECEIVED NOV 1 2 1996

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW Room 814 Washington, DC 20554

Fed mile comunications commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Commissioner Hundt:

RE: CC Docket 96-45, Universal Service

I am writing in support of discounts for libraries as the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal-State Joint Board implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. When passing this legislation, it is clear that Congress meant to ensure that carriers must provide services to libraries at a discounted rate.

Libraries such as New Orleans Public need such an equity rate to enable us to continue to serve our communities as access points to information and to help us provide the public with an expanded range of information opportunities for lifelong, work and career development, job hunting and citizenship. This equity rate will spur our library's use of the new technologies and provide our customers with the opportunity to gain new skills and technological literacy at the New Orleans Public Library.

To provide libraries with the flexibility to meet community needs, all telecommunications services available commercially, by tariff, or by contract must be available to us at a discount. We are, to the citizens of New Orleans, the provider of local community electronic information.

We have been a responsible and accountable user of technology since we first automated in 1981. Throughout the years, we have, and will continue to, efficiently leverage all available resources, but we need affordable, discounted access to better serve our public.

I encourage you to assure universal service for all Americans by providing discounted and equitable telecommunications rates for our public libraries.

Sincerely,

C. Daniel Wilson, Jr. City Librarian

CDWjr:ns



# DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS Medical and Regional Office Center Fargo ND 58102

Ul:9195

#### FY PARTE OR LATE FILED

March 20, 1996

In Reply Refer To: 437/11

RECEIVED NOV 1 2 1904

Office of the Secretary Federal Communications Commission Washington, DC 20554

SUBJ: Telecommunication Act

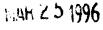
This letter is in support of the use of telemedicine in rural settings to provide improved health care delivery. At present, telemedicine is in its infancy at the Fargo VA Medical and Regional Office. We support the University of North Dakota's MEDSTAR system of educational broadcasts and are exploring the feasibility of a telemedicine system with a private sector health care provider to provide prompt, competent diagnostic and therapeutic care to veterans in outlying areas.

In North Dakota, scattered and remote small towns, long distances and severe weather often present a hardship for patients travelling to obtain health care. Telemedicine, through teleconsultation/telediagnostics, will enable practitioners in rural communities to obtain timely input from expert consultants. It will save time and money for both patients and facilities, and provide greater access to care to an underserved population. Additionally, telemedicine offers a support system to physicians in these outlying communities and will enhance the ability of small towns to recruit and retain health care professionals.

for

DOUGLAS M. KENYON Center Director

cc: UND Center for Rural Health



# DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS Medical and Regional Office Center Fargo ND 58102

March 20, 1996

In Reply Refer To 437/11

Office of the Secretary Federal Communications Commission Washington, DC 20554

SUBJ: Telecommunication Act

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DOUGLAS M. KENYON

Center Director

cc: UND Center for Rural Health



P.O. Box 280 • 220 5th Avenue • Turtle Lake, North Dakota 58575 • (701)448-2331

## RECEIVED MAR 218 1996

**FX PARTE OR LATE FILED** 

(1.C. 96-46

March 25, 1996

FCC MAIL ROOM

RECEIVED NOV 1 2 1996

Federal Communications Committees

Office of Secretary

Office of the Secretary Federal Communications Commission Washington, DC 20554

Dear Sirs:

I am writing on behalf of the Telecommunications Act of Community Memorial Hospital, a 35-bed hospital staffed by 2 physicians is currently using Telemedicine through St. Alexius Medical Center, a regional hospital approximately 60 miles from our facility. Our telemedicine equipment has been in place for approximately 5 months with an excellent results since its inception.

I see telemedicine as a key factor in rural healthcare for a number of reasons:

- 1. Most small communities have a high concentration of elderly citizens who are anable to drive or commute to larger cities for medical care. This gives the local facilities the opportunity to consult with specialists while keeping the elderly patient in town versus having to be transported long distances for medical follow-up.
- 2. Many patients seem to gain respect for their hometown physician because the primary care physician makes the same analysis and diagnosis as the specialist in the telemedicine consult. There is less lag time to act on treatment since both the specialist and the physician are working together to treat the patient at the same time.
- It is often very difficult to recruit specialists for rural facilities. Telemedicine gives us an opportunity to utilize their expertise without the high recruitment costs or taking the specialist away from his/her daily practice to go to outreach facilities.

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General Acute Care • Emergency Services • Extended Care • Clinic Services

Office of the Secretary March 25, 1996 Page 2.

- 4. Telemedicine is an excellent form of technology which benefits patients first-hand. They can visibly see and talk with the physician directly. With the technological advances in communication, I see telemedicine as a key element for rural and urban medical centers to work together without competition. Once the equipment is installed, the only real expense is the monthly phone line connection.
- 5. Lastly, it does not take additional staff to run the telemedicine equipment. With minimal training the equipment can be handled by nursing staff while consultation is being performed.

I hope that this information is of help to you as you implement regulations on the Telecommunications Act of 1996. If you have any further questions in regards to this matter, please feel free to call me at 701-448-2331 and I'll be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Dale Aman

Assistant Administrator

cc: Brad Gibbens

UND Center for Rural Health

**Corpus Christi** Independent School **District** 801 Leopard • P. O. Drawer 110 Corpus Christi, Texas 78403-0110

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT Superintendent of Schools FAX: 512-886-9109 512-886-9002

FY PARTE OR LATE FILED

May 9, 1996

RECEIVED

NOV 1 2 1996

Federal Communications Commission Office of Secretary

CC Docket No. 96-45

The Honorable Reed Hundt Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW, Room 814 Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am the Superintendent of Schools for the Corpus Christi Independent School District, and I would like to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the FCC to adopt rules that fully and aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association, et.al. Please include this letter in the formal record.

Specifically, I urge the FCC to include for deep discounts a range of telecommunications services that will give my district more affordable access to the Internet as well as to interactive, voice, data and video capability necessary for distance learning. It is also important that these services be provided directly to the classroom, where the learning actually takes place. Finally I urge the Commission to address the affordability needs of both the capital expenses of services and the ongoing costs.

Many teachers in our district are already using their computers to access the Internet. It is exciting to see what their students are able to do. We have students in our high schools who are maintaining the home page for their schools. Middle school students are using America Online to conduct research for their science classes. Elementary school students are visiting the Smithsonian via the Internet.

Unfortunately, only a few of our students currently have these opportunities because of the limited availability of telephone lines in the classrooms. Since ours is a large urban district, the cost to provide those opportunities to every classroom would be quite large. If we were able to provide this access, children in our district who have never been out

of the county would be able to take virtual field trips to other states and countries. Students from elementary schools would be able to communicate with students in middle schools and high schools and share their learning experiences. Teachers could upload lesson plans to a district databank and share their expertise with all the other teachers in the district.

The possibilities are great. As usual, all that stands between the creative minds of the teachers and the students and the wonder of technology is money.

I understand that technology in the classroom is critical to ensuring that our children can succeed in a high-tech world marketplace. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadcast range of educational technology to our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D. Superintendent of Schools

jbb



CREIGHTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

learning today for a new tomorrow

Ab

GOVERNING BOARD

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SUPERINTENDENT Dr. Donald D. Covey CC Docket No. 96-45

The Honorable Reed Hunt Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814 Washington, D.C. 20554 RECEIVED

NOV 1 2 1996

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

FY PARTE OR LATE FILED

Dear Mr. Hunt:

I am the school board President in the Creighton Elementary School District in Phoenix, Arizona, and I am writing to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the FCC to adopt rules that aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for school districts and libraries. I support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association as regards this issue. Please include this letter in the formal record.

I would like to urge the FCC to include in their plans comprehensive discounts for a range of telecommunications services that will give the Creighton District more affordable access to Internet services, as well as for voice, data and video capabilities necessary for distance learning possibilities. Through our experiences with technology use in our district, we have learned that these services must be provided directly to the classroom, where it can be integrated into the classroom curriculum where it can most effectively impact instructional delivery. I encourage the Commission to not only consider the initial capital expenses of such services, but the ongoing costs of support and training as well.

The Creighton School District is located in east central Phoenix, Arizona, and has seven urban schools serving 8000 students in grades K-8. Our disadvantaged students represent a segment of our nation's population that frequently have little hope of achieving the "American Dream" but who have the potential to succeed in our universities and workplaces given appropriate and meaningful educational opportunities. Recognizing that we needed to update, expand and strengthen the use of technology for instructional purposes, a five-year strategic plan was developed in 1991. Phase One provided increased access to state-of-the-art technology by upgrading computer labs, providing technology for research in our libraries and teacher workstations in the classrooms.

In the four years since the 1991 technology plan was adopted, we have increased access to technology in our classrooms on minimal basis with the current ratio being 1 computer for every fourteen students. In addition, we have

provided teacher technology training in the form of teacher workshops which focused on the use of software, hardware and Internet use. These efforts while successful within their scope, have resulted in limited access to technology in the classroom, and limited integration of technology in the curriculum. We recognize the need for greater access and more intensive staff development efforts if we are to achieve the broader use of telecommunications technology to achieve our vision of a classroom without walls.

Our district has experienced the difficulties of low student to computer ratios, outdated hardware and software, and lack of funding to obtain emerging technologies. The "affordability" barrier with technology is a challenging one, but we feel that access for students is critical to ensuring that our children are able to succeed in a high-tech marketplace. I encourage the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the widest range of educational technologies to our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

Ms. Mary M. Malm

School Board President

Creighton Elementary School District No. 14

*MKM/rsg* 5/6/96

CC:96-45 AD



P. O. BOX 2360 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804 FY PARTE OR LATE FILED

May 7, 1996

CC Docket No. 96-45

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW, Room 814 Washington, D.C. 20554 RECEIVED NOV 1 2 1996

Federal Communications Commission Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am the Chairperson for the Hawaii State Board of Education. I urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the FCC to adopt rules that fully implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association and others. Please include this letter in the formal record.

I urge the FCC to include for deep discounts a range of telecommunications services that will give Hawaii's schools and public libraries more affordable access to the Internet as well as to interactive, voice data and video capability essential for distance learning. It is imperative that these services be provided directly to the classroom where learning actually takes place. I further urge the Commission to address the affordability needs of both capital expenses of services and ongoing costs.

In the State of Hawaii which has but one Board of Education, the 242 public schools are found in rural, urban and suburban areas. The Board of Education also oversees 50 public libraries strategically located across the state.

Hawaii is currently implementing a plan to establish a statewide telecommunications infrastructure that offers interactive voice, video, and data telecommunications. All of the 242 public schools will have at least a mini-Local Area Network by the end of this year. Less than 90 schools remain to be connected to the Wide Area Network. Telecommunications technology is being used to:

- expand distance learning through a virtual school which offers secondary course credits via on-line/on-air courses;
- provide student instruction and staff development through video conference centers and cable broadcasts statewide;
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- provide free access for all public school students and staff to the Internet through a
  partnership between the Hawaii Department of Education and Maui Super Computer;
  and
  - establish on-line public access catalogs at all school libraries on a library-based network.

Hawaii would like to install new technologies such as (1) wireless NII band, (2) satellite to broadcast news programs and virtual school courses, and (3) high data rate terminal-uplink/downlink station.

We face "affordability" barriers to technology usage.

- Completion of local Area Networks at each school site.
- Maintenance of video conference connects on all of the islands beyond Oahu (\$3000 per month x 7 sites = \$21,000 per month for video link).
- Maintenance cost of cable headends at \$100,000 per year per headend.
- Multiple T-l connections among all of the seven major islands in the state.
- Purchase of hardware/software.
- Need for alternative connectivity such as wireless to underserved, difficult-to-serve areas.

To date, technology applications have benefited Hawaii greatly. We have experienced:

- increased capability in professional development through two-way interactive video conference sites in each of the seven districts:
- successful experimentation with alternative educational delivery systems that provide direct student instruction;
- Internet enhancement of teaching and learning;
- paper-less schools through electronic bulletins, referrals, etc.;
- delivery of state office services to schools through Lotus Notes; and
- centralization of financial management and student information services for all schools.

Technology application in the classroom is critical to ensuring that schoolchildren can succeed in a high tech world marketplace. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring to our children the broadest range of educational technology.

Sincerely.

Mitsugi NAKASHIMA, Ed.D.

Chairperson

cc: Board Members

Asst Supt Diana Kaapana-Oshiro

Q:96-45



alle

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education
Post Office Box 30035
Charlotte, North Carolina 28230-0035
Telephone (704) 379-7141

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

May 9, 1996

Susan Burgess, Chairperson
Arthur Griffin Jr., Vice Chairperson
John W. Lassiter
Pamela R. Mange
Samuel L. Reid
George R. Dunlap
Louise S. Woods
John A. Tate III
Lindalyn Kakadelis

The Honorable Reed Hundt Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW, Room 814 Washington, DC 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

RECEIVED

NOV 1 2 1996

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

#### Dear Chairman Hundt:

#### Imagine:

- having up-to-date information from the countries of the world.
- using e-mail for cultural exchanges among students around the world.
- reading today's newspaper from Germany or Japan, in German or Japanese.
- visiting art museums around the world.
- having a virtual hospital in your classroom, reading an x-ray, making your own diagnosis, and then comparing it with the doctor's.
- reading Supreme Court decisions 30 minutes after the decisions are reached.
- e-mailing state legislators your opinion about current legislation.
- finding lessons plans.
- conversing by e-mail with educators world-wide.
- electronic publishing and web page design by students.

All of this is possible with the Internet, and is currently happening in some of our schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

As Chairperson of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, I would like to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the FCC to adopt rules that fully and aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National Schools Boards Association, et al. Please include this letter in the formal record.

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman Federal Communications Commission May 9, 1996 Page Two

By summer 1996, the CMS Wide-Area Network will connect offices, classrooms, and libraries in approximately 60 schools and 4 administrative areas. This connectivity, however, represents less than 50% of our 130 schools. To fully connect all schools would take significant funds in order to provide telecommunications equipment, computer systems, data cabling, digital dataline access, and ongoing monthly costs.

Schools with access to the Internet and to global information resources provide their students a technological advantage that causes an ever-widening gap between the information haves and have-nots. As a nation, we must ensure that our children have the best possible competitive advantage, so that they can compete in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st Century.

The students and staff of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools must have the most affordable and highest speed access to the Internet. In addition, we must be prepared to take advantage of technological innovations that will shape a digital economy driven by video, voice, and data communications.

Dynamic changes are occurring in information systems technology and in the delivery of resources to the classroom and library. The promise of the telecommunications revolution is the opportunity to enhance teaching and learning and to prepare students to compete in an ever-changing world.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Burgess

Susan M. Burgess

/ws/ch internet.fed

CC:4645

#### **Montebello Unified School District**

123 SOUTH MONTEBELLO BOULEVARD / MONTEBELLO, CALIFORNIA 90640-4729 (213) 726-1225

MY

May 16, 1996

EY PARTE OR LATE FILED

The Honorable Reed Hundt Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW, Room 814 Washington, D.C. 20554 RECEIVED

NOV 1 2 1996

Fedami Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am a local school board member from Montebello Unified School District in Montebello, California, and I would like to urge the Federal-State joint Board and the FCC to adopt rules that fully and aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association, et. al. Please include this letter in the formal record.

Specifically, I urge the FCC to include for deep discounts a range of telecommunications services that will give my district more affordable access to the Internet as well as to interactive, voice, data and video capability necessary for distance learning. It is also important that these services be provided directly to the classroom, where the learning actually takes place. Finally, I urge the Commission to address the affordability needs of both the capital expenses of services and the ongoing costs.

In my 32,000 student urban school district, just to the east of Los Angeles, we are working very hard to provide our students and teachers with access to updated telecommunications technology. So far, we have budgeted very carefully to construct a digital network that is about 30% completed. We are also taking full advantage of interconnection initiatives from Pacific Bell and GTE to link our campuses to the Los Angeles County Office of Education for internet access. We expect that our first connections will be "up" this summer, and that eight of our 27 campuses will be connected by the opening of school in September.

Looking forward, it is our first priority to complete connections to all 27 of our campuses. In addition, a number of our principals and teachers have expressed a keen interest in point-to-point distance learning over publicly switched networks and construction of complete local area networks on their campuses.

Planning to reach these goals is moving forward, but the affordability barriers that exist are very high. Estimated cost for wiring and equipping just one of our intermediate school campuses for telecommunications access in the classroom is \$83,000. Our current average cost for local single line access to a public switched network from one of our schools is just under \$.02 per minute. This means that if one school uses just one local public line for eight hours per day during the course of a typical 261 day school year, the cost to our district is \$2,505.60. In today's fiscal atmosphere, it is hard to find the financial resources to extend these services to twenty-seven campuses.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
HECTOR A. CHACON, President
THOMAS M. CALDERON, Vice-President
DARRELL H. HEACOCK, Clerk
FRANK M. SERRANO, Member
RICHARD L. ADAMS II. Member

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**ADMINISTRATION** 

The Honorable Reed Hundt May 16, 1996 Page -2-

In our schools, where we have been financially able to expand telecommunications technology, we have seen that access to digital networks can motivate our students to become better information managers and communicators. It is our goal to equip each of our students to become self-directed, life-long learners. For citizens of the "global village," access to telecommunications technology is absolutely essential. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadest range of educational technology to our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

Hector A. Chacon

President, Board of Education Montebello Unified School District

cc: Norman J. Kirschenbaum, Superintendent of Schools





## United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY Washington, D.C. 20240

**FX PARTE OR LATE FILED** 

April 12, 1996 RECEIVED

Honorable Reed E. Hunt Chairman Federal Communications Commission Washington, D.C. 20554

Federal Communications Commission RE: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Office of Insular Affairs wishes to submit comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Order Establishing a Joint Board which implements the Congressional directives set out in Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934, as added by the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The Department of the Interior supports the goals and principles of universal service support mechanisms, especially for Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). We urge the Commission to do everything in its power to ensure that they are included in all aspects of universal service.

We support the Joint Board and the Commission basing the universal service policies on the seven principles listed in the Notice and Section 254 (g). We urge that those principles' have full application to the CNMI and Guam:

- 1. The residents of these insular areas should have quality service at just, reasonable, and affordable rates. We support domestic rate integration for these areas as a means for quality service at affordable rates. At the present, these insular areas must pay higher prices for telecommunications services and many times are deprived of certain services available to other Americans.
- Access to advanced telecommunications and information services must include those insular areas. We urge the Commission to seek ways to facilitate access to the distant geographical of the islands.
- 3. Consumers in the insular areas should have access to telecommunications services. They are low income customers in high cost areas. We, also, support the inclusion of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands into the North American Numbering Plan to facilitate this access.
- 4. All providers of telecommunications service, including those in the insular areas, should make an equitable and nondiscriminatory contribution to the preservation and

advancement of universal service. We support the inclusion of Guam and the CNMI governments, residents and businesses into the "core" group for universal service.

- 5. The specific and predictable support mechanisms should be extended to these insular areas.
- 6. Access to advanced telecommunications services for schools, health care, and libraries must be given to the CNMI and Guam. We support universal service support for these additional services. Their distant location and small population make access difficult and expensive; therefore, it is imperative that a special effort be made to see that these services are extended.
- 7. In whatever other principles as the Joint Board and Commission may determine necessary, we ask that special consideration always be given to the insular areas.

We support voice grade network access, touch tone dialing, single party service, emergency services, and access to operator services as "core" services receiving universal service support. In addition, we ask for universal service support to include toll-free access to 800 services and on-line information services for the CNMI and Guam.

Universal service is important to Guam and the CNMI as it will facilitate closer economic, social and political ties with the contiguous United States. Without universal service, the United States citizens in the insular areas will be unable to access a comparable level of affordable telecommunications services, causing them to be left economically and socially isolated from the mainland United States. It is the responsibility of the United States Government to assist these insular areas achieve economic development, and telecommunications is a primary basis for such development.

Sincerely,

Allen P. Stayman

Director

Office of Insular Affairs

## **FAX MESSAGE**

from

# **DIVISION OF POLICY**



Office of Insular Affairs U.S. Department of the Interior 1849 C Street, NW, MS 4328 Washington, D.C. 20240

Phone: (202) 208-6816 Fax: (202) 501-7759

Date: April 12, 1996

To: Marion Gordon

Agency: FCC

Number of pages (including cover):

Fax Number: 418-1414

NOTE:

Universal Service letter is in the process of being sent to FCC by courier 3:45 pm

OIA will be sending comments supporting Rate Integration next week

FYI

NO RUSH

PLEASE RUSH

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The Honorable Reed E. Hunt, Chairman Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, NW Room 844 Washington DC 20554 Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

RE: CC Docket 96-45, Universal Service

Dear Chairman Hunt,

I am writing to you in support of discounted rates for libraries and schools as the FCC and the Federal-State Joint Board implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. It is clear that Congress understands the significance of such measures, and means to ensure that libraries and schools will be able to provide telecommunications services to their students and patrons at costs that will not reduce their already severely limited budgets even further.

Libraries and schools need to have these discounts made available to them to adequately serve their respective constituencies. Libraries and schools are among the few providers of universally accessible access points to the information infrastructure that can provide the American public with the range of opportunities that is in the best interests of both

consumer markets and new opportunities for lifelong learning and technological literacy.

Libraries need the capacity to support large numbers of users simultaneously, using high bandwidth and multimedia applications. Public and academic libraries have a proven track record of efficient, accountable use of any information resources at their disposal. They need affordable, discounted access to best serve the American public.

This access should be available and affordable for the institutions that have contributed the most to America's preeminent status as a free and technologically proficient society - our schools and libraries. I encourage you to help assure universal access for all Americans by providing discounted and equitable telecommunications rates for libraries and schools.

Sincerely,

Tony Neuron